4.6 Recommendations to support consistency of zoning

Three reserves located in the North-west CMR Network were identified as having an inconsistency in zoning as it relates to their management regime: Ashmore Reef CMR, Ningaloo CMR and Mermaid Reef CMR. All of these reserves have well-established management regimes and were declared under legislation that was in place before the commencement of the EPBC Act and before the more recent release of revised guidelines for assigning IUCN categories to MPAs.

Ashmore Reef CMR was originally declared in 1983. The majority of the reserve is assigned as IUCN Ia and has been closed to the public since 1997. A small part of the reserve is managed as a RUZ, assigned as IUCN II, which is open to the public and allows for subsistence recreational fishing. Two management plan cycles for the reserve have occurred without significant change, and no compelling case has been proposed to alter the current management approach.

Ningaloo CMR, adjacent to the Ningaloo Marine Park in Western Australian waters, was first declared in 1987 and is managed as a RUZ, assigned as IUCN II. Management of the CMR provides for recreational activities to occur consistently with the adjacent Ningaloo Marine Park. Feedback on Ningaloo CMR did not support any changes to the activities that are currently allowed, and there was no case to alter the current management approach.

Mermaid Reef CMR was originally declared in 1991 as a strict nature reserve (IUCN Ia) and has been managed over many years to allow recreational activities. It has been through one management plan cycle. No compelling case has been mounted to alter current management arrangements and allowed activities.

BAP Recommendation 4.2:

- **Reassign the Ashmore Reef CMR RUZ from IUCN II to IUCN IV.**
- **Reassign the Ningaloo CMR RUZ from IUCN II to IUCN IV.**
- **Reassign the Mermaid Reef CMR SZ from IUCN Ia to MNPZ IUCN II.**

The outcome of this recommendation will be more consistent zoning and management arrangements across the CMR estate.